VZCZCXRO7829
PP RUEHLH RUEHPW
DE RUEHIL #0093/01 0151534
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 151534Z JAN 09
FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1051
INFO RUEHBUL/AMEMBASSY KABUL 9668
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 9434
RUEHNE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 4296
RUEHKP/AMCONSUL KARACHI 0893
RUEHLH/AMCONSUL LAHORE 6623
RUEHPW/AMCONSUL PESHAWAR 5490
RHMFISS/FBI WASHDC
RHMFISS/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ISLAMABAD 000093

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/15/2018
TAGS: PREL PTER PGOV PK
SUBJECT: PAKISTAN ANNOUNCES TASK FORCE TO INVESTIGATE
MUMBAI ATTACKS

REF: ISLAMABAD 79

Classified By: Anne W. Patterson for reasons 1.4 (b), (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: On January 15, Interior Minister Rehman Malik
announced a Federal Investigation Agency-led (FIA) task force
to investigate the Mumbai attacks of November 2008. Malik
emphasized Pakistan's commitment to investigating and
prosecuting all the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks. He
also outlined GOP actions to date in the Mumbai-related
investigation. Malik's formal task force and his strong words
defending Pakistan's cooperation and investigation represent
the first public and formal strategy presented by the GOP.
The announcement was welcomed by Indian diplomats, but they
look forward to more tangible data and results. The Indian
Embassy indicated the GOI would welcome Tariq Aziz either as
a new National Security Adviser or in a renewed role as a
back-channel interlocutor; however, Zardari told the
Ambassador that Chief of Army Staff (COAS) General Kayani
opposed using Aziz. Formation of a task force is a key step
forward in the Mumbai investigation, one that will hopefully
coordinate multi-lateral law enforcement and intelligence
efforts to ensure successful Pakistani prosecution of the
perpetrators. End summary.

INTERIOR MINISTER'S PRESS CONFERENCE

¶2. (U) On January 15, Interior Minister Rehman Malik
announced the formation of a "high-powered" task force to
lead the formal investigation into the Mumbai attacks. The
task force would be headed by Pakistan's leading
law-enforcement body, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA),
and would report back "in a few days." Malik promised that
Pakistan is committed to bringing the perpetrators of the
Mumbai attacks to justice. Also, he announced that the GOP's
response to the Indian dossier would soon be made public.

¶3. (U) Malik went on to describe the significant steps that
the GOP has already taken in the Mumbai-related
investigation. After the UN Security Council's 1267
Sanctions designation against Jamat-ud-Dawa (JUD), the
Ministry of Interior instructed all provincial governments to
seal all offices of JUD, freeze all assets, bank accounts,
and property, ban all publications, seal all presses, cancel
all arms licenses, and ban JUD leadership and activists from
any public role or organization activity under the name JUD
or any successor name. Based on these instructions, law
enforcement has taken action against JUD across Pakistan.
Malik passed out a list of actions taken thus far for the
press. (Scanned copy of document emailed to SCA/PB desk.) The

significant actions include the arrests of 124 members of
banned organizations, including JUD leader Hafiz Saeed.
Also, several JUD camps have been closed and six JUD websites
have been shutdown.

¶4. (U) Malik invited Indian investigators to join in the FIA
inquiry and stressed that all major Pakistani political
forces were onboard. When his authority to act was
questioned, Malik responded that he had checked first with
the Prime Minister and President. Further, he said he planned
to meet with both former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and
Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman.
Malik described Pakistan's actions as necessary steps for any
good neighbor and asked journalists how they would feel if
such a appalling attack had taken place against Pakistan.

¶5. (C) On January 14, Malik asked the Ambassador to encourage
Washington to issue a statement acknowledging the formation
of this task force. Malik explained that the task force
would coordinate with relevant Pakistani and international
intelligence and law enforcement agencies and ministries to
make sure that all the evidence would help to prosecute in
Pakistan the perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks.

INDIAN RESPONSE

¶6. (C) Indian PolCouns P. Kumaran met January 15 with A/DCM.
 He said his Embassy was encouraged by Malik's press
conference and he hoped the GOP would release specific
information about those individuals who had been arrested and

ISLAMABAD 00000093 002 OF 002

jailed (versus those only held under preventative detention
or house arrest). A/DCM agreed but pointed out that Pakistan
often used preventive detention until it had evidence to file
a First Incident Report (FIR) and make an actual arrest.
A/DCM noted that the opening of a formal investigation to
analyze information shared to date and expand an
investigation which the Ministry of Interior had in reality
already begun were welcome steps.

¶7. (C) A/DCM noted that Malik had renewed the offer of a
joint investigation with India. The U.S. had urged India to
agree to proceed with either a bilateral or trilateral
investigation. Our goal was to increase information sharing
at all levels so we could both bring perpetrators to justice
and to prevent any future attacks. Kumaran said there was
already a bilateral Counter-Terrorism Dialogue, but it had
not produced real cooperation over the years. He noted there
was a growing chorus of voices in India to reduce cooperation
and exchanges with Pakistan, as Indian Home Minister
Chidambarum had proposed to reduce trade, cultural and even
diplomatic ties. A/DCM suggested that this would be
counterproductive to our shared goals of bringing the Mumbai
attackers to justice because the GOP would respond
negatively. Kumaran complained to the A/DCM that India had
agreed to restart the Composite Dialogue even after the
bombing of the attack on its Embassy in Kabul; in exchange,
Pakistan had promised cooperation that has never
materialized. Nevertheless, he agreed that Mumbai was
different in several respects, and he welcomed the Malik
announcement of an investigation.

¶8. (C) Kumaran noted that India was dismayed that former
National Security Advisor Ambassador Mahmood Durrani had been
fired, as he had been a friend of India and a true believer
in the goal of improving relations. Speculating about the
choices to replace Durrani, Kumaran said that India did not
know a great deal about Jehangir Karamat, former Pakistani
Ambassador to the U.S., but they knew Tariq Aziz well. He
indicated that he expected India would react positively if
Pakistan were to appoint Aziz, either as NSA or in his
previous role as a back-channel negotiator. However,
President Zardari told the Ambassador on January 15 that COAS
Kayani had rejected using Aziz as an interlocutor.

HAFIZ SAEED'S 1267 DESIGNATION

¶9. (C) On January 14, A/DCM met with MFA South Asia
Additional Secretary Aizaz Chaudhry. Chaudhry mapped out a
plan for the Friends of Pakistan (septel) and expressed
dismay that all of his work to move the Composite Dialogue
forward had been destroyed by the Mumbai attacks. The GOP,
he said, was discouraged to hear Indian Home Minister's
statement suggesting the GOI would reduce trade, cultural and
diplomatic ties. In closing, Chaudhry said he wanted to give
the U.S. a quiet heads-up that the son of Hafiz Saeed had
approached the MFA to request that his father be de-listed by
the UN's 1267 Committee. The MFA had referred the matter to
Prime Minister Gilani for a decision. Chaudhry indicated
that the GOP would probably need to respond formally by
providing the UN delisting procedures in a way that indicated
it was not the GOP that proposed Saeed's name for sanction.

¶10. (C) Comment: Malik took a significant step exposing
himself politically, and he would very much welcome public
support from Washington. He is prepared to quietly allow FBI
participation in this task force and, we believe, will give
us access to at least some of the detainees once they are in
Ministry of Interior custody. End comment.
PATTERSON